

A NEW VARIETY OF *ERIOGONUM PRATTENIANUM* (POLYGONACEAE:
ERIOGONOIDEAE) FROM THE SOUTHERN SIERRA NEVADA

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ABSTRACT

A new variety of *Eriogonum prattenianum* Durand (subg. *Oligogonum*), the var. *avium*, is proposed for plants found on subalpine granitic rock outcrops in the southern Sierra Nevada. It differs from the more northern, lower elevation, generally larger var. *prattenianum* of volcanic flats and slopes in having subglabrate upper leaf surfaces.

KEY WORDS: Polygonaceae, taxonomy, *Eriogonum*, California.

INTRODUCTION

In 1968, Munz and Reveal (Munz 1968) noted the existence of an isolated high elevation population of *Eriogonum prattenianum* in Fresno Co., California. At that time the plant was known only from a single collection. In 1981, Tim McLaughlin, then with Kings Canyon National Park, recollected the plant at Kettle Dome overlooking the Middle Fork of the Kings River, but its significance was not immediately noted. In 1983, Larry L. Norris, also with the Park Service, reexamined the McLaughlin collection and concluded that it represented the southern expression of *E. prattenianum*. At that time he informed the junior author and in 1984 Shevock and McLaughlin hiked to Kettle Dome to collect adequate material for a proper analysis. In the intervening years the senior author found additional herbarium material indicating that the plant occurs in Madera Co.

TAXONOMY

Eriogonum prattenianum Durand var. *avium* Rev. & Shevock, var. nov.—TYPE: UNITED STATES, CALIFORNIA: Fresno Co.: East face of Kettle Dome overlooking Tehipite Valley, Kings Canyon National Park, T19S, R29E, SE¼NW¼S26, 9400 ft elev, 5 Aug 1984, Shevock & McLaughlin 10977 (holotype: US!; isotypes: BM, CAS, GH, MARY, MO, NY, RM, RSA, UC!).

A var. *prattenianum* foliis subglabris super differt.

Plants low rounded subshrubs, 1-2 dm high and 1.5-3 dm across; *leaves* elliptic, 0.5-1 cm long, 0.2-0.5 cm wide, densely white-tomentose below, subglabrous and bright green above, the petiole 0.1-0.4 cm long; *flowering stems* erect, slender, 3-7.5 cm long, thinly pubescent, bracteate about midlength; *inflorescences* capitate, 1-1.5 cm across; *bracts* restricted to the middle part of the stem (technically at the apex of the stem and base of the peduncle), 4-6, foliaceous, narrowly elliptic, 3-8 mm long, 1.5-3 mm wide, tomentose below, subglabrous and green above; *peduncles* erect, slender, 2.5-5 (6) cm long, thinly tomentose; *involucres* solitary, campanulate, the tube 3-4 mm long, 3-5 mm wide, thinly tomentose, the 8-10 reflexed lobes 2-3 mm long; *flowers* yellow, 3-6 mm long including the 1-1.5 mm long stipe, glabrous, the tepals spatulate to obovate; *stamens* exserted, 3-4 mm long, the filaments pilose basally, the anthers 0.5-0.6 mm long, yellow; *achenes* light brown, 4-5 mm long, glabrous.

Specimens Examined. - UNITED STATES. CALIFORNIA: Fresno Co.: 7 mi E of Hume Lake in the Lockwood Grove area, Sequoia National Forest, 8 Aug 1963, *Breedlove 5730* (DUKE, US); Tehipite Valley, 6-10 Jul 1900, *Hall & Chandler 512* (DS, MIN, MO, UC); E face of Kettle Dome, 13 Aug 1981, *McLaughlin 002* (THRI); W face of Kettle Dome, John Muir Wilderness, Sierra National Forest, 5 Aug 1984, *Shevock & McLaughlin 10973* (CAS, FSC, MARY, RSA, US). Madera Co.: Iron Creek, Sierra National Forest, 6 Aug 1951, *Raven 3807* (CAS).

Eriogonum prattenianum var. *avium* (Latin *avius*, out of the way, alluding to the isolated location of the new variety) is lithospecific to granitic rock outcrops where, on Kettle Dome, it is found with *Cryptogramma acrostichoides*, *Cystopteris fragilis*, *Pallaea bridgesii*, *Arctostaphylos nevadensis*, *Cassiope mertensiana*, *Chrysopsis sempervirens*, *Eriogonum wrightii* var. *subcaposum*, *Heuchera rubescens* subsp. *alpicola*, *Holodiscus dumosus*, *Juncus parryi*, *Penstemon newberryi*, *Sedum obtusatum*, *Senecio fremontii*, *Spiraea densiflora* and *Streptanthus tortulosus*. Habitats similar to that at Kettle Dome are widely scattered and access rather limited so that the distribution of var. *avium* may be greater than indicated here although no new populations have been found in the vicinity of Kettle Dome.

The new variety differs from the more northern and lower elevation var. *prattenianum* in having subglabrous and bright green upper leaf surfaces and a compact, rounded habit. In the strict sense the var. *prattenianum* is a large upright subshrub mostly 3-5 dm high with stout branches terminated by a large terminal capitate inflorescence. This expression is found mainly in Nevada and Placer cos. In Calaveras, Tuolumne and Mariposa cos. is a decidedly more matted herbaceous expression with slender branches and smaller inflorescences.

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LITERATURE CITED

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